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## The Music of School Entertainments

By Eleanor Smith, Chicago, Ill.

The choice of cantatas and operettas, as well as of songs and choruses for special occasions, is a task requiring much time and excellent judgment on the part of the teacher. Especially in the case of elaborate works like cantatas and operettas are mistakes in the choice of material fraught with unpleasant consequences. Music is expensive and the teacher is usually unable to abandon a composition she has begun to study with her pupils if it proves disappointing. Not only is this impossible for financial reasons; it has a bad moral effect as well.

It has occurred to me, therefore, that a few words about various works which have come under my notice recently, and which have succeeded well in performances, may prove helpful.

One of these, a cantata by Karl Burgmein is a very "grateful" work. It is called "Christmas Morn" and consists of songs, choruses, and instrumental *intermezzi*. The music is all beautiful and attractive and is not difficult to read. As the choruses are in two parts and changed voices may be used only in unison passages, this work is best adapted to older children, though certain portions of it may be effectively sung by little people. The accompaniments are written for four hands and there are several piano pieces descriptive of different incidents of the Christmas story which are very charming and effective. "Christmas Morn" is the work of a pupil of Lizst. "Karl Burgmein" is said to be the *nom de*

*plume* of a son of Ricordi, the Italian publisher. The tunefulness of this composer's style is more characteristic of the music of his native country than are his warm and interesting harmonics which show the effect of his later environment. The shortness of the cantata renders it especially practical for Christmas festivals.

An operetta which I have not seen performed but which struck me very favorably on looking over the score, was "Hiawatha's Childhood" by Mrs. Whitely, Supervisor of Music in Kansas City. (*C. C. Birchard & Co.*) The work of an experienced teacher of children its numbers combine simplicity and effectiveness. The Indian *motifs* are characteristic, and the music is all unusually attractive. This operetta would not be difficult to perform and would give pleasure to singers and audience alike.

An operetta highly recommended by Mr. Dykema is May Day Revels by John E. West (*Novello*). The vocal parts of this work which are singable and easy, are interspersed with folk-dances and games which have long been associated with English rural celebrations of May Day. Both music and games are admirably fitted for use in grammar schools.

Similar in character to "May Day Revels" is "Ye Olde Englysche Pastymes," F. W. Galpin (*Novello*). The last mentioned work is, however, a compilation of folk-music, songs, and dances being so grouped as to form a picturesque and entertaining whole. The folk-songs are easy to

learn and to sing, especially as no part-singing is introduced. Both songs and dances are accompanied by piano, violin, flute, oboe and horns in different combinations which add color and character to the performance.

Two cantatas which I have found very charming as material for study with my Hull House classes, are the "Snow White" and "Enchanted Swans" of Reinecke (*Augener Edition*). The former was given two years ago, and the latter will be performed probably in March, 1916. The choruses included in these works are in part more difficult than in the other works discussed in this article. They are also more poetic and beautiful. Many of them are within easy reach of grammar school pupils who read fluently in parts, and whose voices are well schooled, but several would be better suited to High School choruses of unchanged voices. An effective touch was given the Hull House performance of "Snow-White" by adding the song "Snow-White" from Reinecke's fifty songs. It was used as a prelude to the cantata and was sung by a group of young children. This group sang also the Dwarfs' song, "Now the Tasty Soup is Made" with good effect. The music of both cantatas is in Reinecke's happiest vein. It is romantic but restrained. Its musical thoughts are delightful and expressed with that perfection of workmanship so characteristic of this composer. The librettos of both works are better constructed and more sensible than most librettos, but needless to say, they have suffered at the hands of the translator.

"Snow White" and the "Enchanted Swans" are both settings of old fairy

stories in ordinary cantata form with solos and duets, semi-choruses and choruses. The latter are mostly composed in three parts, though there are unison choruses as well.

One of the imperative necessities of success in the giving of these works is an excellent accompanist. The accompaniments are not invariably difficult, but they all require good technical skill, interpretive ability, and fluency in reading, and the performance may fail for want of these qualities in the accompanist. "The Enchanted Swans" in addition to its piano accompaniment provides for a harp, a cello and two horns in a majority of the numbers.

A short cantata for high school, (unchanged voices), is "Nature and Love" by Tschaikowsky (Novello). This is more "grown-up" than the cantatas and operettas named above but it is not more difficult. There are three solo voices as well as a three part chorus, and while this cantata is one of the early works of the great Russian, it still gives some hint of the genius which came later to such remarkable fruition.

A Christmas cantata by Humperdinck translated and adapted for use at Hull House is one which I trust may soon be available for American schools. Like many European compositions, its musical thought seems much more mature than its poetic content. One is constrained to wonder whether European children are so much more naive than ours, or whether American children are so far behind their foreign cousins in musical scholarship. However this may be, much must be changed in this cantata to make it acceptable to our children. For while the music is very attractive and not at all diffi-

cult, parts of the text are of a most incredible babyishness. The exquisite living pictures arranged for this work by Miss Nancrede and Miss Benedict of Hull House add immensely to the beauty of the performance. It is hoped that an arrangement will soon be made with the author and publisher authorizing an American edition, including a description of the pictures given at Hull House. This would surely be welcomed by all teachers in search of beautiful and practical material for Christmas entertainments.

Programs of folk-songs and folk-dances are popular and easily arranged. Certain of the songs may be sung as solos in their original tongues, and costumes will add to the attractiveness of the program. An interesting concert was once given at Hull House, the program being composed of folk-lore and fairy music. This was contributed to by children of various ages and included songs like the following:

Sleeping Beauty .....Brahms  
The Dustman .....Brahms  
Nursery Songs (Augener Edi-

tion) ..... J. Brahms  
Snow White.....Carl Reinecke  
Stork, Stork, Stander. Carl Reinecke  
The Barley Brownie.. Carl Reinecke  
Fifty Songs (Schirmer).....

..... Carl Reinecke  
Fairy Folk .....Eleanor Smith  
Balder The Beautiful .....

..... Eleanor Smith  
(Songs of Life and Nature)

Little Jacob .....Wilhelm Taubert  
Death and the Nightingale..Malloy  
Cornish Lullaby ..... Helen Hood  
The Necken ..Norwegian Folksong  
The Fisher .....F. Schubert  
The Three Gypsies..... English  
(Songs of the West..Baring Gould)

Arscott of Tetcott, English ..

.... (Eleanor Smith Series No. 4)  
Glenogie ..... Scotch

A set of piano pieces by Reinecke "Maerchengestalten," (or "Legendary Figures,") was also used on this occasion. Each piece is a characterization of some well-known figure in German folk-lore as "*Regentru-*  
*de*," "*Rubezahl*," "*Cinderella*." The music is original and quite fascinating to children and was a valuable addition to that program.

On another occasion a program of labor songs was given which I remember as having required a great amount of labor on the part of the program-maker. There are labor songs to be found in the folk-song collections of all nations. But authentic labor-songs like "The Painful Plow", "Weel May the Keel Row", "Can Ye Sew Cushions?" "Caller Herrin'" and "Over Here" are comparatively rare. Much more numerous are those spurious labor songs in which labor is only an incident in the conventional love song. Two modern dramatic labor songs figured on this program. These were "The Shadow Child" and "The Sweat-Shop" by Eleanor Smith. Today might be added "The Song of the Shirt" by Sidney Homer.

Publishers' catalogs teem with lists of works which are intended to be used in school entertainments. Many of these are of course commonplace and dull. Others are far too difficult to be practical. But as in all other departments of school music, there is much beautiful material which is perfectly practical, which is known to few. And here, as elsewhere, only he who seeks will find.